



**CENTER FOR VETERANS ENTERPRISE**

**PROCEDURE**

**EVALUATION TEAM**

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**Approval**

This Procedure titled “Evaluation” is approved effective February 1, 2013.

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_____ QA (signature)	_____ Print Name	_____ Date
_____ Director, CVE (signature)	_____ Print Name	_____ Date

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## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Purpose

Ensure that Applicants satisfy the regulatory requirements to be verified as either a Veteran-owned or service-disabled Veteran-owned small business under 38 CFR Part 74. Review of initial examinations and re-verifications are performed by the Examination Team for quality of review and validity of recommendation. Review examination materials and, when necessary, all pertinent information and documentation to determine whether the Applicant should be approved, denied, sent for a site visit, returned to the Examination Team for further work, or outright cancelled based on information received by the Center for Veterans Enterprise (CVE). Review on-site examinations, when applicable, performed by Site Visit Team for quality of review and validity of recommendation.

### 1.2 Scope

Validation of a recommendation to approve, deny, cancel or conduct additional review (site visit) of a Verification Program application.

### 1.3 Roles

- **Initiation Team** – Checks veteran’s status in BIRLS and SAMS systems, and reviews submitted documents for completeness. Writes veteran if required by the results of the status checks and the document review.
- **Initiation Team Lead** – Leader of the Initiation Team.
- **Examination Team** – Performs initial examination of application; recommends that the Applicant be (1) approved; (2) denied; (3) sent for further review by the Evaluation Team; or (4) cancelled. A member of this team is an **Examiner**.
- **Examination Team Lead** – Leader of the Examination Team.
- **Evaluation Team** – Performs the functions detailed under the individual Evaluation Team roles listed below.
- **Evaluation Team Clerk** – Assists with administrative actions, when needed.
- **Tier 1 Evaluation Team Paralegal** – As required, performs in-depth, first-level review of Examination recommendation materials and Applicant documentation. Recommends that the Applicant either be (1) approved, (2) denied, (3) sent for site visit, (4) returned to the Examination Team for further work, or (5) recommended for cancellation. Always reviews recommended approval, denial and cancellation letters for accuracy and consistency with recommended examination outcome.
- **Tier 2 Evaluation Team Paralegal** – As required, performs second-level review of Tier 1 paralegal work product; examines recommendation materials and Applicant documentation. Recommends that the Applicant either be (1) approved, (2) denied, (3) sent for site visit, (4) returned to Examination team for further work, or (5) recommended for cancellation.

- **Evaluation Team Supervisory Paralegal** – Supervises and tracks paralegal workflow. Assigns files for review by Tier 2 paralegal; reviews Tier 1 & 2 paralegal work product for quality and quantity. Answers questions and provides guidance to paralegals regarding how to perform quality review on a file. Provides guidance to paralegals regarding work standards and proper policies and procedures.
- **Evaluation Team Federal Employee** – Performs final review of recommendations to approve, deny, or cancel an Applicant, and send companies for site visit; authorizes scheduling of recommended site visit; reviews Tier 1 & 2 paralegal work product; reviews Examination Team recommendation materials and Applicant business documentation as necessary; answers questions and provides guidance to paralegals regarding how to perform quality review on a file; and reports QR metrics and tracking data to CVE management.
- **On-Site Examination Team** – Conducts site visits at company location for Applicants recommended for site visit by Evaluation Team.
- **Site Visit Coordinator** – Liaison between Evaluation Team and On-Site Examination Team; schedules site visits at the request of the Evaluation Team and ensures that On-Site Examination Team meets contractual deadlines.
- **Executive Team** – CVE’s Director, Deputy Director, and any supporting functions such as Executive Assistants and Executive Action personnel.

#### 1.4 Definitions and Acronyms

Term	Definition
Applicant	A business concern that has submitted an application with CVE to be verified as a Veteran-owned or service-disabled Veteran-owned small business.
Examination Queue	The queue that contains all applications that are currently undergoing examination by the Examination Team.
IDL	Initial Denial Letter
Level 2 Queue	The queue that contains all applications that have been recommended for denial by the Examination or Evaluation Teams.
Evaluation Team	The team of clerks, paralegals, and federal employees that process and track all files which have been recommended approval, denial, or additional review by the Examination Team.
SDVOSB	Service-disabled Veteran-owned small business
Site Visit	Onsite examination and evaluation of Applicant performed by a site visit contractor.
VOSB	Veteran-owned small business

PII	Personally Identifiable Information
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## 1.5 References

- 38 CFR Part 74
- P.L. 111-275
- VA AO49 IFR

## 1.6 Revisions

Revision Number	Date of Issue	Brief Description of Change
1.0	4/19/2012	Initial Submission
2.0	7/23/2012	SOP rewrite (see audit report QA-005)
2.1	2/1/2013	Handle 2 different review tracks (Track 1 and Track 2), according to which directive from CVE Director is in effect; remove checking for incomplete application at end; correct some typos; add flowchart

## 2. Process/Procedure (Mapping)

### 2.1 Entry Criteria

Details of Entry Criteria
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Applicant must have submitted a complete application, to include all required documents</li><li>• Initiation process must be completed</li><li>• Initial examination must be completed, to include formal recommendation</li></ul>

### 2.2 Tools Required to Complete Procedure

- N/A

### 2.3 Inputs

Input	Detail of Inputs and remarks
	Examiner's recommendation to approve, deny, ask for further review, recommend site visit, or cancel an application
	Evaluation Team Member recommendation to approve, deny, ask for further review, recommend site visit, or cancel an application

## 2.4 Outputs

Output	Detail of Outputs and remarks
Initial application approval letter	Evaluation Team recommends approving application
Initial application denial letter	Evaluation Team recommends denying application
Reverification letter	Evaluation Team recommends approving, denying, or cancelling application.



### 3. Procedure (Activities/Steps)

#### 3.0 Determine Review Track and Priority as Set by CVE Director

- Step 1** Evaluation Team will process cases in the priority set by the CVE Director,. The CVE Director will set the priority through written or verbal correspondence.
- Step 2** All Examination recommended denials will be processed using the Track 2 process stated in Section 3.2 of this SOP.
- Step 3** At a minimum, 10 percent of all Examination recommended approvals will be processed.
- Step 4** All other applications will be sent directly to the Federal Review step of this Standard Operating Procedure in support of small business goals and to remain in compliance with 38 CFR Part 74.

#### 3.1 Track 1 Review

- Step 1** On a daily basis, Evaluation Team Federal Employee (or clerk, if designated) monitors the Quality Review Queues to identify new entries.
- Step 2** On a daily basis or sooner as current workload dictates, Clerk assigns records to the Federal Review approval team.
- Step 3** Review case file notes and any necessary documentation to confirm that no issues remain.
- Step 4** Review draft approval letter for clarity, spelling, grammar, formatting, etc. and make any needed changes.
- Step 5** If any changes are made to the draft approval letter, place a copy of the new version into the company's case file and dispose of any outdated draft letters.
- Step 6** Notify Clerk that a determination letter is ready to be forwarded for signature.
- Step 7** Update case remarks with notes on actions taken.
- Step 8** On a daily basis, clerk or designated Federal Employee submits draft letters via email to Evaluation Team Lead or designated representative for review and further forwarding to Determination Team. Evaluation Team Federal Employee may conduct this step and the previous step if work volume does not require clerical support, or clerical support is not available.
- Step 9** Evaluation Team Lead forwards Letters to Executive Team for processing and updates.
- Step 10** Evaluation Team Federal Employee (or clerk, if designated) monitors the appropriate Queues to ensure that records have been closed within 4 business days of submitting letter for signature.
- Step 11** As records are closed, Evaluation Team Federal Employee (or clerk, if designated) "closes" the line item in the "Evaluation Team
- Step 12** END OF PROCESS.

### 3.2 Track 2 - Tier 1 Paralegal Review

- Step 1** On a daily basis, Evaluation Team Federal Employee (or clerk, if designated) monitors the Quality Review to identify new entries.
- Step 2** On a daily basis or sooner as current workload dictates, Evaluation Team Supervisory Paralegal assigns records to the Tier 1 Paralegals or directly to Tier II Paralegal for review depending on evaluation personnel availability and queue backlog. Recommendations received from Examination Team for additional review should be assigned to a paralegal within 3 business days or as soon as practicable based on the size of the queue and available paralegals.
- Step 3** Evaluation Team Supervisory Paralegal sends each Tier 1 or Tier 2 Paralegals and the Evaluation Team Federal Employees a list of case records that are ready for review.
- Step 4** The Paralegals identify and select the oldest record that is assigned to him or her based on guidance from Evaluation Team Supervisory Paralegal.
- Step 5** The Paralegal reads through the remarks, beginning at the bottom (oldest remark), to gain an overall understanding of the application's history. Paralegals makes a note of any past verification decisions, delays in processing, special notes, correspondence with the Applicant, etc.
- Step 6** The Paralegal reads to familiarize himself/herself with the facts of the case and reasons for recommendation.
- a) If the company has submitted a complete application (all required documents submitted by Applicant), go to Step 11.
  - b) If the company has not submitted a complete application, and there is a history of unsuccessful attempts to gather the required documentation from the Applicant, then the Paralegal sends a request to the Evaluation Team Federal Employee and the Evaluation Team Supervisory Paralegal, notifying them that the company has not submitted a complete application.
    - (1) Evaluation Team Supervisory Paralegal then returns the case to the initiation queue.
- Step 7** If case was submitted directly to Tier 2 paralegal go to 3.3 Step 2
- Step 8** Paralegal Tier 1 identifies and validates the Examiner's Recommendation.
- a) **Examiner recommended approval.**
    - (1) Ensure that Examiner's recommendation addresses each of the verification requirements.
    - (2) If the examination recommendation has satisfactorily addressed all of the requirements, go to 3.1 Step 1.
    - (3) If the paralegal finds sections, or the Examiner has requested additional review, or the paralegal has reason to believe the finding of the Examiner could be incorrect, it may be necessary to review applicable business

documents in order to complete the process. If this is necessary, follow the steps below:

- a. Select and open the appropriate document to be reviewed. Review document and make recommendations
- b. If the document cannot be found, contact the Examiner.
- c. If Examiner recommends additional review or evidence indicates additional review required, complete the following:
  - i. Review the applicant document on which each reason for additional review is based to confirm that the document was interpreted correctly;
  - ii. Conduct internet searches on Applicant to adjudicate any suspected undiscovered problems with Applicant's case;
  - iii. Review Applicant's documents as required;
  - iv. If evidence indicates an approval, go to Step 13;
  - v. If evidence indicates a denial, draft IDL and go to Step 12b; and alert Paralegal Supervisor and Federal Team Supervisors.

**b) Examiner recommended denial or cancellation.**

- (1) If Applicant is an initial application go to Step 12 b) (3).
- (2) If Applicant is a re-verification application, and Applicant status in VIP is approved, change denial letter to cancellation.
- (3) If the examination recommendation has satisfactorily addressed all of the requirements, review the draft denial or cancellation letter to ensure that formatting, grammar, spelling, content, and readability are acceptable. If any changes are made, place the updated letter into the case file and forward the case for Tier 2 review. Go to Step 13.
- (4) If the paralegal finds sections missing, or the examiner has requested additional review, or the paralegal has reason to believe the finding of the examiner could be incorrect, it may be necessary to review applicable business documents in order to complete the required task. If further review is required, follow the these steps:
  - a. Select the appropriate document to be reviewed. Review document and make recommendations.
  - b. If the document cannot be found, contact the Evaluation Team Supervisory Paralegal, who will contact the Examination Team to retrieve it.
  - c. Review the regulatory citation that the Examiner claims has been violated to ensure that the regulation is being interpreted correctly.
  - d. Review draft denial/or cancellation letter to ensure that formatting, grammar, spelling, content, and readability are acceptable. If any changes are made, place the changed letter into the company's case file.

- e. If Examiner recommended additional review or evidence indicates additional review required, complete the following:
    - i. Review the company document on which each reason for additional review is based to confirm that the document was interpreted correctly;
    - ii. Conduct internet searches on Applicant to confirm any suspected problems with Applicant's case;
    - iii. Review Applicant's documents as stated below;
    - iv. Select and open the appropriate document to be reviewed; and
    - v. Make required corrections and additions on the draft IDL and forward for Tier 2 review. Go to Step 13
  - f. If the document cannot be found, contact the Evaluation Team Supervisory Paralegal, who will contact the Examination Team to retrieve it.
- (5) Ensure that Examiner's recommendation addresses each of the verification requirements.

**Step 9** Tier 1 Paralegal annotates all notes for each verification requirement.

**Step 10** Tier 1 Paralegal makes a recommendation..

**a) If the recommendation is for an approval:**

- (1) Ensure that all verification eligibility requirements are satisfied;
- (2) Place any updated documents in the company's file.
- (3) Notify the Evaluation Team Supervisory Paralegal that a recommendation is ready for review.

**b) If the recommendation is for a denial:**

- (1) Ensure the reason(s) for the denial are listed;
- (2) Ensure that the draft denial letter is clear and free of spelling, grammatical, or continuity mistakes;
- (3) Ensure that all verification eligibility requirements have been addressed prior to recommending for denial;
- (4) Place any updated or additional company documents into the company's file.
- (5) Save the updated draft denial letter to the company's file.
- (6) Ensure to include any remarks summarizing the findings and noting your recommendation are placed in the company's case file
- (7) Notify the Evaluation Team Supervisory Paralegal that a recommendation is ready for review.

**c) If the recommendation is for a site visit:**

- (1) Ensure that reason(s) for the site visit are listed;

- (2) Ensure that all verification eligibility requirements have been addressed prior to recommending the site visit;
- (3) Make a note in the company's file summarizing the findings and noting the recommendation; and
- (4) Send a site visit request message to Evaluation Team Supervisory Paralegal.

**d) If the recommendation is to return to Examination Team for further work or clarification:**

- (1) Ensure to list reason(s) for returning file to Examination;
- (2) Ensure that all verification eligibility requirements have been addressed prior to recommending that the file be returned to Examination; and
- (3) Make a note in the company's file, summarizing the findings and noting the recommendation; and
- (4) Send an email message to Evaluation Team Supervisory Paralegal, notifying him or her that the case should be returned to the Examination Team.

**Step 11** Continue to 3.3 Step 1.

### **3.3 Track 2 - Tier 2 Paralegal Review**

**Step 1** The Supervisory Paralegal or representative receives a company case file from Tier 1 Paralegal. and enters the appropriate information for each new entry in the "Paralegal.

**Step 2** On a daily basis, or as current workload dictates, Evaluation Team Supervisory Paralegal assigns applications to the Tier 2 Paralegals for review.

**Step 3** Evaluation Team Supervisory Paralegal or representative sends the Tier 2 Paralegal and Evaluation Team Federal Employee a list of applications that are ready for review.

**Step 4** Tier 2 Paralegal reviews and completes 3.2 Steps 5-9 (replacing "Tier 1" with "Tier 2").

**Step 5** Tier 2 Paralegal validates Tier 1 Paralegal's work.

**a) If recommending approval, review the any necessary documentation to confirm that no issues remain.**

- (1) Review draft approval letter for clarity, spelling, grammar, formatting, etc.
- (2) If any changes are made to the draft approval letter, place the a copy of the new version into the company's case file and dispose of any outdated draft letters. If no further review required, go to 3.3 Step 7.

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- (3) **If Examination or Evaluation Team members recommended additional review or evidence indicates additional review is required, complete the following:**
- i. Review the company document on which each reason for additional review is based to confirm that the document was interpreted correctly.
  - ii. Conduct internet searches on Applicant to confirm any suspected problems with Applicant's case.
  - iii. Review Applicant documents as required.
  - iv. Select and open the appropriate document to be reviewed.
  - v. Review draft approval letter for clarity, spelling, grammar, formatting, etc.
  - vi. If approval recommendation is upheld, upload for Federal Review.
  - vii. If evidence discovered that indicates denial warranted, draft an initial denial letter (IDL) with applicable issues. Forward and place a draft IDL in the company's case file for Federal Review.
- b) **If recommending denial, or cancellation, review any necessary documentation to confirm the Paralegal's findings. If findings of paralegal are substantiated and no further review is warranted:**
- (1) Review draft denial or cancellation letter for clarity, spelling, grammar, formatting, etc.
  - (2) If any changes are made to the draft denial or cancellation letter, place a copy of the new version into the company's case file and dispose of any outdated draft letters. Go to 3.3 Step 7.
- c) **If Examination or Evaluation Team members recommended additional review or evidence indicates additional review required complete the following:**
- (1) Review the company document on which each reason for additional review is based to confirm that the document was interpreted correctly.
  - (2) Conduct internet searches on Applicant to adjudicate any suspected undiscovered problems with Applicant's case.
  - (3) Review Applicant's documents as stated below.
  - (4) Select and open the appropriate document to be reviewed.
  - (5) Review draft approval letter for clarity, spelling, grammar, formatting, etc. Go to 3.3 Step 7
- d) **If recommending site visit, review necessary documentation to confirm that the issues identified warrant a site visit. Go to 3.3 Step 7.**
- e) **If recommending that the file be returned to the Examination Team, review any necessary documentation to confirm that return to Examination is warranted. Go to 3.3 Step 7**
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- f) If evidence indicates case should be an approval, go to 3.3 Step 7.

**Step 6** Tier 2 Paralegal makes a note in the company's case file, summarizing the findings, noting his or her recommendation, and indicating that the file is ready for the next stage of review.

- a) If Tier 2 Paralegal recommends approval, denial, cancellation, or site visit, go to 3.3 Step 8.
- b) If Tier 2 Paralegal recommends return to Examination Team or Initiation Team for any reason to include lack of required information:
  - (1) Notify the Examination or Initiation Team Lead and the Evaluation Team Federal Employee and Supervisory Paralegal, that a new record has been placed in the appropriate queue.
  - (2) The Evaluation Team Federal Employee (or clerk, if designated) moves the case file to the appropriate queue.
  - (3) When the Examination or Initiation Team completes its additional work, Examination or Initiation Team Lead notifies the Evaluation Team Supervisory Paralegal and the Evaluation Team Federal Employee, that the additional work has been completed and the file has been placed back into the appropriate queue.
  - (4) Evaluation Team Supervisory Paralegal reassigns file to the same paralegal who initially recommended that the file be returned to the Examination or Initiation Team.
    - d. If file is being returned to Tier 1 Paralegal for review, Tier 1 Paralegal re-evaluates the file utilizing the information from the Examination or Initiation Team re-works. Go to 3.2 Step 8.
    - e. If file is being returned to Tier 2 Paralegal for review, Tier 2 Paralegal re-evaluates the file utilizing the information from the Examination re-work. Go to 3.3 Step 4.

**Step 7** Tier 2 Paralegal sends a list of approval, denial, cancellation and/or site visit recommendations ready for review to the Evaluation Team Federal Employee and the Evaluation Team Supervisory Paralegal.

### 3.4 Track 2 - Evaluation Team Federal Employee Review

**Step 1** On a daily basis, Evaluation Team Federal Employee reviews approval, denial, cancellation, and site visit recommendations to validate Evaluation Team paralegal's work. Cases should be worked from oldest to newest, based on application start date. Recommendations for site visit must be reviewed by an Evaluation Team Federal Employee within 3 business days of Tier 2 Paralegal's notification of recommendation.

- a) **If paralegal recommended approval, review the necessary documentation to confirm that no issues remain.**
  - (1) Review draft approval letter for clarity, spelling, grammar, formatting, etc.



- (2) If any changes are made to the draft approval letter, place a copy of the new version into the company's case file and dispose any outdated draft letters.  
Go to 3.4 Step 3.

**b) If Paralegal recommended denial, cancellation, review the necessary documentation to confirm the paralegal's findings.**

- (1) Review draft denial letter for clarity, spelling, grammar, formatting, etc.
- (2) If any changes are made to the draft approval letter, place a copy of the new version into the company's case file and dispose any outdated draft letters.  
Go to 3.4 Step 3.

**c) If Paralegal recommended site visit, review the necessary documentation to confirm that the issues identified warrant a site visit. Go to 3.4 Step 3.**

**Step 3** Evaluation Team Federal Employee makes a note in company's case file noting his or her recommendation, and takes the appropriate action:

**a) If the Evaluation Team Federal Employee recommends approval, denial or cancellation:**

- (1) On a daily basis, Clerk or Federal Employee submits letters for signature to Evaluation Team Lead for review and forwarding to determination team. Note that an Evaluation Team Federal Employee may conduct this step and the previous step if the work volume does not require clerical support, or clerical support is not available.
- (2) Evaluation Team Lead forwards Letters to Executive Team for processing.
- (3) Go to 3.4 Step 4.

**b) If the Evaluation Team Federal Employee recommends site visit:**

- (1) Evaluation Team Federal Employee or Clerk or Supervisory Paralegal, if designated, sends a request to Site Visit Coordinator and Evaluation Team Paralegal with company name and DUNS, that the file be assigned for a site visit.
- (2) The Evaluation Team Federal Employee ensures that the company case file record is in the Site Visit Queue.
- (3) Site Visit Coordinator contacts a CVE Site Visit contractor, requesting that a site visit be conducted.
- (4) When the site visit report is returned, the Site Visit Coordinator notifies the Evaluation Team Supervisory Paralegal and Evaluation Team Federal Employee that a site visit has been returned and is ready for paralegal review.
- (5) The Supervisory Paralegal reassigns file to the same paralegal who initially recommended that the file be returned to Examination.
  - a. If file is being returned to Tier 1 Paralegal for review, Tier 1 Paralegal re-evaluates the file utilizing the information from the site visit report. Go to 3.2 Step 7.



- b. If file is being returned to Tier 2 Paralegal for review, Tier 2 Paralegal re-evaluates the file utilizing the information from the site visit report. Go to 3.3 Step 4.

**Step 4** Evaluation Team Federal Employee (or clerk, if designated) monitors the appropriate Queues to ensure that records have been closed within 4 business days of submitting letter for signature.

**Step 5** END OF PROCESS

### 3.5 Simplified Renewal Process

**Step 1** If the case is a Simplified Renewal with no changes, then it is received directly from the Initiation Team containing answers to 4 simplified renewal questions indicating that no changes to applicant have occurred.

**Step 2** Go to 3.1 (track 1) process as an approval using Track 1 process.

**Step 3** If case is Simplified Renewal with changes, case will go through examination and evaluation process with full review and will follow track 2. Go to 3.2 (Track 2)

### 3.6 Verification and Validation

10% quality control check on all files by Evaluation Team Lead	Full examination to ensure consistency
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### 3.7 Exit Criteria

Details of Exit Criteria
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Signed approval, denial or cancellation letter delivered to Letter Processing Team within Executive Team of CVE</li></ul>